A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND BY H. FLOOD

DUBLIN 1799

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COLLECTION

A LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF *IRELAND.*

A

LETTER

TO

PEOPLE

OF

VIRGINIA

A

LETTER

TO THE

PEOPLE

OF

IRELAND,

ON THE

EXPEDIENCY AND NECESSITY

OF THE

PRESENT ASSOCIATIONS

IN

IRELAND.

IN FAVOUR OF

OUR OWN MANUFACTURES.

WITH SOME

CURSORY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EFFECTS OF A UNION.

DUBLIN:
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ſources of relief, by which alone any country can be ſaved,—her own co-operation and her own ſpirit.

THERE is no inſtance, at leaſt I never heard of any, where a nation enlarged her trade, defended her liberty, and fed her inhabitants by the dint and efficacy of meanneſs and ſubmiſſion; I am ſure Ireland is an inſtance of a country loſing her trade, impairing her liberty, and reducing her people to want by an unparalleled propenſity to ſurrender every thing to Great Britain, without finding relief when ſhe afterwards threw herſelf on the pride of that country for alms and ſubſiſtence.

THE poverty of ſpirit, with which we have yielded ſo much, has held out the remainder an object of plunder, for which no nation nor man will be ever grateful. Our impatience to give has been conſtrued an impotence,

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to keep, or a fear to refuſe, and has proved an invitation to take, without thanks or moderation.

HOWEVER we are convinced at length of what we might have known at firſt, that we cannot be relieved but by our own interpoſition; for England does not feel for Ireland, nor do nations feel for one another;—the political body has no heart—had ſuch a thing as political affection exiſted, we had never been reduced to our preſent ſituation, nor had England robbed us of that commerce, the want of which has ſunk us to beggary. She had not in 1666 deprived us of the live cattle trade; ſomething beneath *her* envy, but *our* great ſubſiſtence; nor had ſhe in 1698, totally and at once, deprived us of the woollen trade, when the country was a ſheep walk; and this act of power was a denounciation of famine againſt the in-

habitants, as it was of war againſt the conſtitution.

THE real, ſtill leſs the imaginary intereſt of Mancheſter, &c. ought not to be preferred to that of a kingdom and an Empire, upon a principle of policy, but certainly it will upon a principle of affection; for each part of England is dearer to *her*, than the whole of Ireland; and nations have affection for themſelves, though they have none for one another.

THE ſacred ſilence till lately obſerved by us, in our own cauſe, left the Engliſh country gentleman at large upon the Iriſh queſtion, to flatter the prejudices of each manufacturing borough, and to decide the fate of this country upon as narrow, ſubſervient, and unſcrupulous a principle as formerly in caſes of election determined

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the rights of his own conſtituents. The ſame ſilence loſt us the miniſter of England. We neither compelled nor enabled him to ſerve us—he could not have hitherto ſtated the diſtraction and reſolution of Ireland as an excuſe for oppoſing the manufacturing towns of his own country—he, therefore, knowing what we would bear and what they would not——yielded——he yielded to ſpirit, and ſtood firm againſt puſillanimity.

THERE is no ſuch thing as political humanity; or, if the ſentiment did exiſt, it is not likely to be found in a country of commerce.

THE habits of Barter do very much contract the political mind.

JEALOUSY, monopoly, and pride, combining in the ſoul of a commercial

cial Empire, exclude every thing, except induſtry, punctuality, and that ſpecies of probity which is neceſſary for credit.

The difference between the tyranny of a Monarch and that of a body of Merchants, conſiſts in ſomething more than being governed by the abſolute will of one man, and the madneſs of a multitude.

The abſolute Monarch will only plunder the individual and the nation of part of their acquiſitions, the mercantile dominion will prevent both from acquiring—under the former, the nation may flouriſh, though ſome individuals feel great acts of cruelty and rapine—under the latter the nation will ſtarve, and there is no individual that will not be ultimately affected by radical acts of ſeverity and reſtriction.—The one takes

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from the tree much of its fruit, the other ſtarves the root, and prevents the bearing.——The one is a moral evil, the other a tyranny, amounting to a phyſical interdict.

With reſpect to Liberty, it may be ſaid that it were better to be prohibited from acquiring, than to have the acquiſition ſubject to be taken away without conſent.—I think ſo; but the mercantile empire, which begins by taking from the connected country her Trade, will ſoon proceed to make very bold attempts upon her Liberty.——Under pretence of maintaining trade-laws, ſhe will aſſert in *all* caſes, and exerciſe in *ſome*, the power of binding internally; and next aſſume the right of taxing—one infringement will lead to another; and the Mother Country, grown inſolent from Empire, and diſtempered from its fumes, to maintain a domi-

a dominion ſhe has uſurped, will aſſert the right of taking away the liberty which ſhe has left.——Such was the power exerciſed againſt America, and denounced againſt Ireland—the reſiſtance of the former has ſaved the latter.

It is becauſe ſuch a theory was not extended that our connection with England is a bleſſing, and not the greateſt curſe that could befal a nation.

Great Britain cannot, I have ſaid, feel for Ireland, and if ſhe did, ſhe is ignorant of her condition.

A country, with ſome reaſon, ſelf-poſſeſſed, greatly agitated about her own affairs—incurious—diſpoſed to neglect all other nations and to ſlight Ireland. Great Britain, whenever our name was mentioned, has ſhewn an ignorance of the cauſe of our diſtreſſes,

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that could be equalled by nothing except her indifference about relieving them. In the latitude which thoſe diſtreſſes afford for conjecture, her people aſcribe our preſent condition to a variety of grievances, none of which are the cauſe, but each of them great aggravations of an original, narrow, and pernicious policy.

Some have attributed the bankruptcy of our merchants, the beggary of our manufacturers, and the univerſal poverty of the kingdom, to a penſion liſt of 100,000l. per annum. There is ſomething more than ignorance that mixes itſelf in this idea;—a determination not to relieve us upon the ſubject of trade.—While they complain of our penſion liſt, they are only guarding their own monopoly, and throw us for redreſs upon reduction without commerce.

MANCHESTER does not care how œconomic our government ſhall be, provided our country does not acquire a trade; the miniſter, on his part, is not anxious about what you may get in trade, provided you ſupport his ſyſtem of prodigality; and thus does Ireland continue diſabled, and overburdened, between manufacturing towns maintaining their monopoly, and the miniſter vindicating his plunder.

ANOTHER opinion attributes our miſery to the high letting of land. If this is an evil in Ireland, it is a very deplorable one, becauſe beyond the power of human ſtatute to remedy—if the tenantry of Ireland will be ſatiſfied to live upon leſs than the neceſſaries of life, while in England they inſiſt upon more, we can not reſtrain the humility of our people by act of parliament—but if the ſuppoſed

poſed high ſetting of land were the cauſe of our diſtreſs, then it had not been the manufacturers, but the tenantry who would have been the firſt and principal ſufferers.

'Tis true the tenantry did feel and will feel, I fear long, the wretchedneſs of the laſt years; not from the exaction of the landlord, but the ruinous contract of the miniſter—the embargo—which lay upon this country for three years like a curſe, and is now felt in its effects like a plague! which prevented the tenantry from making any uſe of their land, and would have rendered any rent an exorbitant one!

But ſuppoſing the land of Ireland too high lett, yet when it is lett for ſo much leſs than the land in England, why ſhould our tenantry feel that rent exorbitant? Becauſe they have not a number

number of manufacturing towns to conſume the produce of their land, nor a foreign market to export their manufacture to; becauſe by reſtrictions on trade they are not permitted to make uſe of their land. The want of trade in Ireland is a rack rent and an enormous land-tax.

If then the cauſe of our diſtreſſes is the high price of land, as it is impoſſible to call in all the leaſes in the kingdom, and to ſet up a ſtandard value beyond which neither the owner nor the bidder ſhall advance, the only remedy I ſee, is to reſtore the ſubjects of Ireland to thoſe laws and charters, which, in common with the Engliſh, gave them a free and open market for the produce of their land.

I must obſerve here, that in moſt of the ſpeculations of the Engliſh upon the

the diſtreſs of Ireland, there is ſomething dangerous; and, as when they aſcribed the famine of our manufacturers to placemen and penſioners, they only meant an averſion to relieve us by enlarging our trade; ſo, when they dwelt on the exorbitancy of our rents, they intended not compaſſion for the tenantry, but a tax upon the landlord.

They ſuggeſt that the gentlemen of Ireland get too much for their land, and that government ought to have its proportion—the government of this country being unable to exiſt without reduction, a free trade or a land-tax, theſe gentlemen would urge you to the latter, inſtead of the two former.—They would extend your grievances in the language of compaſſion, and have diſcovered the great ſeat of your diſorder, to be in that part of the body

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in which you have not yet been wounded.

OTHERS aſcribe the diſtreſſes of Ireland to her military eſtabliſhment—certainly the army is on the part of Ireland a moſt exorbitant contribution to the Britiſh Empire.—The hardſhip is rendered greater by the vaſt proportion of officers appointed without any view to the ſervice, and merely to encreaſe the influence of the crown.—Whether we conſider the ſize or regulation of our army, we muſt acknowledge the eſtabliſhment has been formed with no other view than to ſerve the Empire of Great-Britain, and corrupt the conſtitution of Ireland—there never was a more ignorant idea than a ſuppoſition, that the army of Ireland was her defence; nor has there been a moment (tho' our army has coſt us above 600,000l per annum,) in which this

this country was in a ſtate of internal ſecurity.

THE expence of an army ſufficient to defend us would be worſe than an invaſion; it would lay a poor country under perpetual contribution to ſupport her own army, leſt ſhe ſhould be put under eventual contribution by the army of the enemy.

WHETHER a deſcent is made by a large force to reduce the kingdom, or a ſmall body to pillage, the army we could ſuſtain muſt be inadequate. In the firſt event it would be too ſmall, in the latter its operations would be too late—the miſchief would be done to the particular diſtrict, and the kingdom would be at a further loſs in paying for an unprofitable march of the army.

THUS,

THUS, our linen trade has always been ſubject (when Great Britain is at war) to occaſional depredation and conſtant panic, whenever a veſſel of force is ſeen, or is thought to be ſeen off the coaſt. At this moment ſurely the neceſſity muſt ſtrike every man, of taking the defence of his property into his own hands; when England can't defend you with her navy, Ireland can't pay for an army, and government is afraid of a militia—indeed in this poſture of affairs, the independent companies are ſo neceſſary, that they ſeem to owe their exiſtence to an inſtinctive conſent, operating on all minds at the ſame moment.

THEY are not ſenſible nor honeſt men, who condemn Lord Buckingham for not provoking the people of Ireland, by attempting to prevent them from taking the only obvious meaſures of

defence againſt the natural enemy. Had his Excellency made the attempt, he would have proclaimed that the Engliſh government were more afraid of ſeeing Ireland in a ſtate of defence, than of captivity. In our preſent condition to endeavour to prevent (for it could be no more than an inflammatory endeavour,) the Iriſh from arming, had been to conſpire with the French King againſt them. In a difficult ſituation his Excellency acted with prudence and mildneſs, more conſiſtent with the ſervice of the crown, than an officious interference that frets the people into diſquietude.

But to return—from the cauſes to which numbers in England appear to aſcribe the preſent unfortunate ſtate of Ireland, it would ſeem that in general they have no adequate idea of our ſituation; and that it is ridiculous to ex-

pect from them, without our interference, any adequate relief.

It is true, a penſion liſt is a cauſe, a prodigal ſucceſſion of adminiſtrations is a cauſe, and an exorbitant military eſtabliſhment is a cauſe—but the fundamental cauſe of our diſtreſs is, that, being over burthened by a penſion liſt, and drained by an army, we are diſabled by reſtrictions—the internal ſyſtem of government is one grievance, the external policy of England is a greater grievance. The pillage of her government is forgotten in the monolopy of her people.

Besides the indifference of Great Britain to our miſeries, and her ignorance of our ſituation, there is another cauſe, which, however trivial in appearance, has not a little operated againſt any eleemoſinary enlargement of our

commerce

commerce—the cauſe I mean, is an obſtinate contempt which England has entertained for Ireland; and the origin of that ſentiment is the contempt which Ireland has entertained for herſelf.—I know not how it is, but the gentlemen of this country have hitherto thought they exalted themſelves, by crying down one another; that, by the candour of acknowledging every falſe and opprobrious charge againſt his native country, each individual, ſeparately, acquitted himſelf; and, by a faſtidious ſenſe of his country's imperfections, proved that he, at leaſt, was acquainted with ſomething incomparably better—it is a diſpoſition natural to a people who have collectively ſubmitted to ſome political ſtigma, which, in their perſonal capacity, they labour to cancel.

To a contempt for ourſelves we have added an admiration for England, which

equally ſinks us in her opinion; an admiration founded on our own humility; which has led us to idolize her individuals, to worſhip her faſhions, and tolerate nothing but the manufactures and modes of the Engliſh, to the ruin of our country, and the laughter of theirs.

We have likewiſe loſt her eſteem by our conduct as a people—as a people who, poſſeſſed of the charters of England, of all the laws of all the Edwards, the great foundations of the petition and bill of rights, declaratory only of thoſe laws and charters, have patiently loſt ſome of the deareſt privileges contained in them, and have, in conſequence of ſuch infringements, been kept always impoveriſhed, and have been occaſionally reduced to beggary, without any remarkable ſenſation on our part, except a contempt for ourſelves,

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and an admiration for the country who had thus reduced us to wretchedneſs.

Her public pillagers too, ſent to preſide over us, unknown in their own country, and the ſcourges of ours, have greatly added to our diſrepute, by expoſing the extent of our ſubmiſſion, and making our poverty deſpicable.

A nation, weeping under the conſequence of *Blaquiere*, preſents no reſpectable image of public calamity.

On theſe general principles we cannot expect an effectual enlargement of our trade from the voluntary bounty of England; but if a doubt ſhould remain, turn to her conduct.

In March 1778, an application was made to this country for a vote of credit

dit of 300,000 l. to guard us againſt that enemy whom Great Britain, in conſequence of her civil war, had expoſed us to. In the courſe of that war two events had taken place, which made it difficult for Ireland to raiſe ſo conſiderable a ſum. Her proviſion trade had been ſtopped by an embargo againſt law, under pretence of war, and her linen trade had been a great ſufferer during the courſe of it.

THERE was another reaſon for making the grant of 300,000 l. ſtill more queſtionable.

THE ordinary revenues of the kingdom had been groſsly miſapplied, for a courſe of years, in a ſcandalous ſyſtem of corruption and prodigality, in the civil and military eſtabliſhments, and in every branch of the expences of government—however this ſum was granted

ed in a moment, and without any thing like an eſtimate—it was granted, becauſe it was aſked; and the queſtion was carried by a cry; as if an attention to public money, when the Miniſter was pleaſed to want it, wore the aſpect of diſloyalty.——It was thought at that time judicious to grant 300,000 l. without any ſtipulation in favour of trade or reduction; in hopes that after we had ſhewn ſuch a prompt confidence in our abilities, the pity and gratitude of England would ſpeedily enlarge that commerce which had been formerly reduced by the parliament of Great Britain, and was now over-burdened by the parliament of Ireland.

The miniſter of England was ſuppoſed to be a real, but ſecret friend to this country, and certain conferences were inſinuated as very auſpicious, but entirely myſterious—our ſilence upon the

the ſubject of grievances was to operate like a charm, and the Britiſh parliament was to conceive it indiſpenſably her duty to relieve Ireland, becauſe the Iriſh parliament had not preſumed to think it was theirs.

But though our commons had granted ſo amply, it was well known that the nation was nearly bankrupt, and her manufacturers were begging; and it was apprehended in England, that famine might riſe here, as undoubtedly it would have riſen there, to a commotion, if nothing was done for us by the parliaments of either countries, except the granting away 300,000 l. under the apprehenſion of a ferment.—Five bills, for the relief of Ireland, were brought into the commons of England.

I do not mean to dwell upon them —it was doubtful whether, in their fulleſt

fulleſt extent, they would be a benefit, certain in a diminiſhed ſtate they would be of none—for further particulars I refer to their operation. Theſe bills lay long on the table, and, during that delay, a clamour was raiſed againſt them in England, while a moſt profound and humble ſilence was obſerved on the part of Ireland. Accordingly, theſe five bills were dwindled into one; and, as they owed their birth to an apprehended ſpirit in the people of Ireland, they were indebted for their diminution to the patience of this country, and the growing turbulence of ſome of the manufacturers in Great Britain.

WHATEVER we got, we owe to the firſt ſuppoſition that a ſpirit had kindled in Ireland; that we did not get more, we owe to a diſcovery that ſuch

ſuch a ſuppoſition had not ſufficient foundation.

THE enſuing year, from March 1778, was attended with great diſtreſs, but little emotion on the part of Ireland, and without any relaxation on the part of England—on the contrary, every week was marked with the rejection of ſome of thoſe humble endeavours that would have taken the chance of making the ſituation of this country ſomewhat leſs unfortunate.

THE friends of Ireland took the ſenſe of the Britiſh parliament upon ſeveral branches of trade, and found upon every branch *that* ſenſe was hoſtile—It is fortunate that we know, but *we do know* that the ſenſe of the parliament of England, if left to itſelf, is decided againſt Ireland.

A PROPOSAL

A PROPOSAL was made to take the ſtate of her commerce into conſideration, but was objected to as too general; and the friends of Ireland were deſired to ſpecify particular branches. They ſpecified ſuch as carried a faint poſſibility of relieving one country without being of importance to alarm the jealouſy of the other—each ſpecific propoſal was negatived.

THE cotton trade was attempted, Mancheſter was clamorous.

AN application was made for the import of ſugar, but Scotland petitioned againſt us.

EVERY town has ſome intereſt in ſome trade or other; and, while an Engliſh or Scotch town or company oppoſe—the trade in queſtion will be with-held. According to this way of proceeding,

ceeding, no branch of commerce will ever be granted to Ireland, except ſuch a one as no other people thought it ſafe to embark in.

It is remarkable that ſeveral petitions againſt extending commercial benefits to Ireland ſet forth her peculiar capacity to carry on the trade which the petitions prayed may be prohibited —they ſtate the bleſſings of providence on this country, and call down the Britiſh legiſlature to blaſt them.

It became irkſome at laſt to ſpeak on the Iriſh queſtion, a queſtion always marked with ſomething very humiliating. An acknowledgement of our ill-treatment, a cold approbation of our loyalty, a faſtidious neglect towards relieving us, and an impatience for the order of the day.

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THE miniſter was abſent at firſt, and voted againſt us at laſt—the country gentlemen requeſted delay, to have an opportunity of conſulting their conſtituents, that is, of raiſing a clamour againſt Ireland—in the courſe of theſe debates the ſounds of land-tax and union became ſo familiar in the houſe, that it appeared the idea of England not to grant any thing at all, except upon terms which would make the grant an oppreſſion.

HERE it muſt occur to every man, how futile are the repreſentations of a Lord Lieutenant, or the negotiations of individuals. To ſuppoſe that Ireland could obtain any thing by the perſonal weight or addreſs of individuals, viſiting London upon their private buſineſs. To enable theſe individuals, by the ſilence of our Parliament, to undertake, if they had cho-

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ſen it, the diſtreſſes of the kingdom, to depreciate her pretenſions, or make miſerable compromiſes, with as little authority as advantage, was not more abſurd than to expect we could be reſtored to commerce by the repreſentations of our miniſtry.

It has been the known expedient of Government, in order to continue or encreaſe an expence which the nation could not ſupport, to hold out an immediate enlargement of her trade; and, when an addreſs was propoſed to obtain that enlargement, by the interceſſion of parliament, it has been the art of miniſters here to propoſe that ſuch a difficulty ſhould be left to their repreſentation.—Thus were they enabled to parry every attempt, to reduce a ſyſtem of ruinous expence, or to enable the nation to bear it. The Lord Lieutenant and his Secretary

cretary not being natives, nor likely to know very accurately or feelingly the ſtate of the nation, his repreſentation was to be founded upon the information of the ſervants of the crown; to whoſe lot it had fallen to deny the fact of public diſtreſs, who had been in a courſe of publicly ſaying the very contrary to that which they were clandeſtinely to repreſent, who had declared the revenues would riſe, that our commerce was flouriſhing, and that we were the happieſt people in the world.

Such men, though incapable of believing what they had openly aſſerted, were equally incapable of having a thorough, ſerious, or honeſt impreſſion of thoſe public misfortunes, which were to be the ſubject of his Excellency's repreſentation. Accordingly, this repreſentation, made with good intentions

tions by the Lord Lieutenant, but being no more than the private ſtating of his ſervants, deſtitute of national or perſonal authority, has wanted publication, energy, and weight, and every thing which was neceſſary to give it a chance of ſucceſs.

The conſequence has been only a gift to miniſtry here of 68,000 l. to ſupport certain regiments now in the ſervice of Britain. Inſtead of being rendered able to ſuſtain our eſtabliſhments, or relieved of ſome part of their weight by retrenchment, our government, like our manufacturers, is ſuſtained by temporary contribution, and the nation expoſed to the future incumbrance, and the future inability to bear it.

It has been, I believe, above four years ſince the folly prevailed of expecting that the miniſters of the crown would

would open the trade of Ireland, notwithſtanding the ſilence of her Parliament and the patience of her People—and ſo ſtrongly were ſome poſſeſſed of that hope, that in 1776, our Commons, in an addreſs to Lord Harcourt, compliment him, and congratulate themſelves in the following farcical expreſſions:—"We acknowledge, with "gratitude, that, in return for the libe-"rality of the commons, new objects of "trade, thro' your Excellency's interpo-"ſition, are preſented to us, and new "ſources of commerce are opened."—

To which his Excellency, with much affected humility and real abſurdity, anſwers:—"If, during my adminiſtra-"tion, any new ſources for the extenſi-"on of your commerce, and the en-"couragement of your manufactures "have been opened, the ſucceſs of thoſe "endeavours is principally owing to

" your having enabled me to make the " ſtrongeſt repreſentations in your fa- " vour."

WHAT followed—a decay of trade, and a famine among the manufacturers.

IN March 1778, from the dwindled bill of export, we expected that Ireland would aſſume a new and flouriſhing face.

WHAT followed—the bankruptcy of almoſt all our merchants, an almoſt entire extinction of trade, and the further prevalence of famine. Thus our confidence and our miſeries have preſerved a faithful proportion to each other—we have loſt our revenues, fed our manufacturers by charity, ſeen our commerce expire, and congratulated ourſelves on new ſources of trade, almoſt

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in one and the ſame period, until we have loſt the ability either to ſupport our eſtabliſhments, or to feed our people. We have hitherto acted as if we thought our beſt chance of relief was the extremity of misfortune, which was to operate, not on the virtue of our parliament, but on the compaſſion of England for a country, that manifeſted no compaſſion for herſelf.

Compelled at laſt to take ſome meaſures for our preſervation, by ſeeing the reſult of the repreſentations of the Lord Lieutenant, the boaſted intentions of miniſters, the gratitude of England, and the liberality, the ſubmiſſion, and the miſeries of Ireland, to be the repudiation of every attempt in our favour, accompanied with an inſult on our misfortunes in a bill that would give us a tobacco trade, we be-

gan to aſſociate—what is the conſequence? the lords are ſummoned, the king is addreſſed, our grievances are admitted.

The aſſuming ſneer, and vulgar impertinence ceaſe; and the Engliſh now talk of us as fellow ſubjects whom they have greatly injured. Our pretenſions which did not venture to come into the houſe of lords, and were ſlighted out of the houſe of commons, are by your own aſſociation introduced into both. The Engliſh claim to have a ſenſe of our injuries, becauſe we have ſhewn a ſenſe of them ourſelves; but they acknowledge our grievances, and go no farther; they rejected our cauſe when they had time to conſider it, and recur to the conſideration, when they declare it is too late. Will any man believe either houſe of Parliament in earneſt, when they will not continue ſitting to

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ſave a country they have unanimouſly voted to be in a ſtate of diſtraction? Their addreſſes, critically too late, are but poor endeavours to diſperſe your aſſociations, and to deceive a people, whom they do not think it, for the preſent, adviſeable to inſult. Without giving you a new trade, they would prevent you from aſſociating in ſupport of that trade which you have already; and are making way for the demands of government the next ſeſſion of Parliament.

THAT, when our miniſtry come to the commons with an aſtoniſhing arrear, without commerce or retrenchment, they may plunder you upon the credit of certain benefits, which the Britiſh parliament do not propoſe to confer on us.

An aſſociation then, to which we owe even this dawn of commercial life, is neceſſary, and ought to be a written one.

If an internal reſolution was ſufficient, inſtead of a written covenant, our preſent misfortunes had not in the ſame degree taken place; for there have been, for a long time, every reaſon, every exhortation, and violent reſolutions to give an invariable preference to our own manufactures; beſides, if an internal reſolution were ſufficient, that reſolution would not now be broken. At this moment goods, which we could manufacture ourſelves, are imported, from Manchester too and Scotland, conſigned to factors, reſident in this metropolis, who are forcing upon us, even at this time, their ruinous merchandize.

THE number of inhabitants in a country does not bear relation to what ſhe can nouriſh, but employ.

HOLLAND therefore has in proportion more inhabitants than Ireland—the latter does not contain the number ſhe could nouriſh, nor does ſhe nouriſh all whom ſhe contains.

THE fruits of the earth are a monopoly; the common people, not having land by inheritance, muſt ſubſiſt by induſtry, otherwiſe proviſion does not come within their circulation.

THUS it happens, in Ireland, that when the country is covered with proviſion, the people are ſtarving. As manufacture is neceſſary to feed and multiply the race of man, ſo an export trade, or a market for redundancy, is neceſſary for manufacture; otherwiſe the manufacture

facture will not be perfect, cheap, or profitable. Hence it is, the want of an export woollen trade destroyed our internal trade, and left to England, even at our own market, that advantage, which a manufacture, that is free, must ever have over one which is circumscribed.

Our wearing English manufacture is then the natural effect of the freedom of *her* trade, and the restraints upon *ours*; and while the cause continues, the effect will take place, if either the trade or the people shall be left to themselves. If we do not combine to oppose the operation of so very strong a cause, by something more lasting and palpable than our internal resolutions many will forget them; the very violence with which they entertain them now, secures their departure from them. Many will be influenced to break them by

by the ſame power which makes ſuch people reluctant to ſign them; many will be tempted to forſake them by the bribe of a bargain; many will conſider their own inſignificance, and, in a ſtrain of affected humility, give themſelves a criminal latitude; ſome will compromiſe in their own conſcience for their country, and think a wretched enlargement of our trade, or a more wretched declaration of future intention in our favour, ſufficient to juſtify their return to foreign conſumption.

Thus a ſpirit, not regulated nor communicated, nor perpetuated by covenant; violent in ſome places, indolent in others, will ſoon evaporate in all.

The methods which we took of relieving ourſelves, until the aſſociation was thought of, were certainly well intended, but utterly contemptible. To

encourage

encourage idleneſs by feeding our manufacturers as beggars, was a practice not founded on any principle of commerce which I have ever heard of.

To overſtock the conſumers by buying up at once what they might have occaſion for hereafter, was to employ more than a proportionate number of manufacturers for the preſent, and leſs for the future—it was to delude into a trade, by a ſudden conſumption, men whom we would not ſupport by a ſteady demand; and to ſow the ſeeds of future expedients, and future beggars. To refuſe to covenant now againſt all, except native manufactures, would be to make all our paſt meaſures in a high degree miſchievous—it were to bring our manufacturers into a ſnare by a capricious conſumption; to leave the conſumer overſtocked with Iriſh goods, and at liberty to reſort to Engliſh ones; and, of courſe, the manufacturer expoſed

to

to two evils, the preſent glut of Iriſh manufactures, and the future conſumption of Engliſh.

To obviate theſe inconveniencies by a ſubſcription, or a ball, would be a policy not more radical than reſpectable. Theſe are poor temporary expedients, that may ſtop the cry of famine without feeding the hungry.—— They will reſemble ſome of our premiums which, with good intentions, but little or languid ſucceſs, we have repeatedly given to furniſh ourſelves with the various articles, with which the country abounds, but over which it has ſlept. By reſorting, as individuals, to foreign markets, we have prevented the effect of thoſe ſums we give as a ſociety. We invite, by premium the ſubject to attempt a manufacture, which we afterwards will not conſume. We encourage him to work for one market, and go ourſelves to another; and thus

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we beggar the community by conſumption, and the individual by our premium.

If we really mean to ſerve our manufacturers, our meaſures muſt be ſtrong, ſyſtematic, and comprehenſive.

It is a conſiderable difficulty we have to contend againſt; we are to reſiſt the various attempts to undermine our reſolution, and to reſtore us to our antient languor upon all public ſubjects.

We are to contend againſt the manufactures of a country completed in every thing, and againſt our own habits of admiring that country in every thing. We are to forſake the vanity of foreign magnificence, and to reſort to ſuperior and profounder ſources of pride—the want of it—the merit of exhibiting the

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rude efforts of our own country, of bringing out her hidden faculties, and training her on in arts and induſtry. Virtuous cares! new in Ireland, now neceſſary; ſuch as every man and every woman can afford—a debt which the gentry owe the public, for indeed they have lived on it.

I CANNOT ſuppoſe any claſs of men will refuſe this covenant.

As to thoſe who have generally voted with the miniſter, without any oſtenſible reaſon either in venality or virtue; who are corrupted without being bribed, and ſeem to eſpouſe the court becauſe they do not love the people; ſuch men will hardly be able to juſtify themſelves in refuſing to ſign an aſſociation which they have made indiſpenſible, by a variety of votes given for the continuation of our expences, and againſt parliamentary

parliamentary application for the enlargement of our commerce. Theſe men, whom the public has obſerved conſtantly voting againſt every popular meaſure, will not be able to perſuade the people to depend upon the voluntary and inviſible operations of their public ſpirit.—The poor pretence of oppoſing a popular torrent will not avail now.

Such men need not be afraid of the ſpirit of the people, if their prudence takes a part in conducting it.

The people of Ireland have been always ready to ſubmit to the authority of men of rank, provided they are alſo perſons of public character; but if men of rank, having in view ſome poor favour, or mean friend, or proſtituted honour, ſhall ſhrink from the people, under pretence of fearing their licence; they

they leave the people to become licentious, and the public cauſe to periſh, in the raſhneſs of a mob, and the fraudulent moderation of a puſillanimous gentry.

Such a covenant would bring theſe men to a declaration, whether they were Iriſhmen or not—the conſequence of their aſſent or diſſent would be beneficial.

They would be obliged to act as citizens; or, deſtitute of public principle, they would be deſtitute of character.

When we ſpeak of the ſpirit of the people, as a thing to be dreaded, we ought not to overlook one very important truth—the conſtitution is now reduced to a ſtate in which no public benefit can be obtained, but by the collective

collective body of the people. If we wiſh to defend our land againſt a tax, our chance conſiſts in this only, that the influence of the Crown ſhall ſtand in awe of the clamours of the people. When the majority of thoſe who compoſe the legiſlature, have gotten a complete victory over remorſe about conduct and character, there is no reſtraint but fear; no ſecurity, but the interpoſition of the people.

As to the ſervants of the crown, I do not ſuppoſe that they will take ſo deciſive a part againſt Ireland, as to refuſe themſelves the honour of ſigning this aſſociation, and become aliens, merely becauſe they are in the pay of their country. It would be a declaration that they have as little property in the land of the kingdom, as they have ſhewn principle in her great council. They will pleaſe to recollect that they

they annually receive conſiderable ſums of public money, for a duty generally overpaid, and not ſeldom neglected. That ſome part of the public diſtreſs has been not a little owing to their expenſive ſalaries; that, by not confining themſelves to their own manufactures, they ſpend upon foreign manufacturer's money, which is not their own; which they take from the country firſt, and ſpend out of it afterwards; that by ſigning ſuch a covenant, they will do away a multitude of ſins, at a time when the conſequence of their votes and employments has become an arrear above any thing experienced either in peace or war—they will alſo conſider that we cannot be expected to fund ſuch a debt, in order to fee ſuch men for oppoſing every ſalutary meaſure, in and out of parliament, and for even preventing the very means by

 which

which alone the public ſhall be enabled to feed them.

As to the woollen-drapers and mercers, it is of the laſt conſequence that they ſhould ſign, becauſe they have it in their power, unleſs bound, to render the aſſociation of other men of little or no conſequence, by impoſing one manufacture for another, and have actually now great quantities of foreign cloth, &c. which they have depoſited in different warehouſes, waiting until the preſent ſpirit ſhall abate, that they may return to their former trade, by which they have beggared the community. They ſhould not forget the miſchiefs they have done already, nor the dangers which they have eſcaped, by the moderation of thouſands, whom they have been acceſſary to ſtarve. It is a very ſingular circumſtance, that a gentry laviſhing the public money, a merchantry

chantry carrying on a ruinous trade, and thouſands of manufacturers reduced to beggary, by the commerce and conſumption of both ſhould have lived in one and the ſame metropolis, without any interruption of tranquillity. It diſtinguiſhes the people of Ireland from real acts of violence, committed in other countries with leſs provocation.

THERE are two ways by which we can enforce the covenant, without reſorting to tumult.—Firſt, by agreeing never to vote for, but ever againſt ſuch perſons as refuſe to ſign. Here we ſhall feel the benefit of the octennial bill, and the people will find their balance in the conſtitution.—Secondly, by publiſhing the name of the draper or mercer, who refuſes the covenant, and perſiſts to import, and by agreeing ne-

ver to deal with the perſon ſo publiſhed.

It is impoſſible to overlook two great benefits, which muſt immediately reſult from this aſſociation—one is—it would throw the nation on her reſources.

The neighbourhood, and advanced ſtate of other countries, have taught us to be idle—we neglect to make uſe of our country, and proceed to deſpiſe it. There is no vice in our ſoil, nor infirmity in our people; but, the unfortunate facility of living upon the induſtry of others, has reduced us to a ſtate of phyſical dependency, the cauſe of an abject political ſpirit.

So would it be with the human body. The limbs of a giant would become weak, if he were afraid to ſtand upon them.

them. The other benefit ariſing from the covenant is, it would enrol us as a people.

THE law has made the Roman Catholic our fellow citizen, the aſſociation will give him an opportunity of ſigning himſelf a fellow citizen: I am ſure the cruel policy of England towards this country, makes him a fellow ſufferer—I ſhould be glad to ſee the names of Lord Shannon, and Lord Kenmare, on one and the ſame paper, in purſuit of common intereſt, as fellow ſubject, and fellow ſubject.

THE aſſociation is a meaſure wonderfully calculated to unite all deſcriptions of men, and to inſpire that union —it is not a queſtion about the power of the crown, in which the Whig might take one ſide and the Tory another—it is not a queſtion about the liberties of the

the people, in which the Diſſenters might go farther perhaps than the Roman Catholics; nor is it about the plunder of government, where the majority of parliament might be on one ſide, and the majority of the people on the other; but it is that queſtion where Whig and Tory, Diſſenter and Roman Catholic, country gentleman and courtier, muſt agree; they muſt unite to prefer property to poverty, and trade to the want of it.

So much does the aſſociation keep clear of the diviſion, and apply to the common intereſt of all perſuaſions, that it might be moulded into a form of prayer, and all religions might join in it.

In oppoſition to this aſſociation, I have heard of but one objection, the danger of provoking England. To know whether

whether this fear is founded, let us conſider what we have loſt by it. And firſt, the very commerce we are now applying for. Under this fear we have ſuffered *Magna Charta*, and whole volumes of privileges, to be infringed; and the hereditary rights of our peerage to be loſt for ever. It were eaſy to ſhow that Ireland poſſeſſed every thing by her laws, and has kept but little by her precaution.

While we ſheltered ourſelves under this fear, the 6th of George 1ſt was enacted (that declamation of a party not a law) declaring that Ireland might be bound without her conſent. During this fear, his Majeſty's miniſter, in his ſpeech from the throne, on a queſtion whether England was to enforce, by arms, a power to tax America, declared that he would mention ſuch a power, not only over America, but every part

of

of his dominions; and during this fear, an application was made to Ireland to extort her approbation of ſuch a principle, and another application to ſpare her troops, to enforce that principle by arms. Not only the records of England have perpetuated our injuries, her debates have teemed with our inſults; the name of Ireland hitherto was never mentioned without an affront.

We were reproached with the benignity of the Britiſh nation, and of the Britiſh government. Our privileges and our wretchedneſs were alike denied, and the debate was forſaken, to degrade the kingdom of Ireland, with *Magna Charta* in her hand, into the ſtate of colony, and the moſt miſerable of colonies—a colony ſubject to be taxed without her conſent.

There is nothing ſo provoking to one party as the habit of extravagant compliance

compliance in the other—it creates a contumacious diſpoſition, which is an active principle, and diſcharges its bile by repeated indignities.

As we have found no protection in our meanneſs, ſo have we experienced in our late ſpirit and aſſociation a certain refuge from the ſcorn of Great Britain.

But it is ſaid our Linen Trade is in danger.

That there are men who wiſh to circulate ſuch an apprehenſion is certain—men who pretend to fear England, when in reality they are afraid, leſt a national ſpirit ſhould get up in Ireland.

But I do not think it likely that the Engliſh will ſtarve the North, becauſe

cauſe we attempt to feed the inhabitants of the other provinces of Ireland. That, if Ireland endeavours to nouriſh her manufacturers, and prevent tumult by an act of neceſſity, England will endeavour to ſtarve our manufacturers, and lay the foundation of tumult by an act of hoſtility. I do not comprehend that ſpecies of retaliation which makes the moſt wanton and extreme enmity the return for an act of ſelf-preſervation; and which ſuppoſes England only retaliates, when, to mortify herſelf, ſhe deſtroys our only exportable manufacture; becauſe we, to ſupport ourſelves, not to injure her, eventually effect ſome of her various and extenſive branches of commerce.

The woollen trade was to be given up with a reſervation, and the linen to be encouraged without rival

or

or limitation; to take away the woollen trade without reſervation, and to encourage the linen ſubject to a rivalſhip and a reſtraint, and now to attempt to leave us without any export trade at all, becauſe we have reſorted to our own markets, would be a meaſure equally unjuſtifiable and impracticable; for to ſuppoſe that England could diſpenſe with Iriſh linen, is, I believe, as great a miſtake as to ſuppoſe that Ireland could find no other market for linen but England. The trade would force its way into new channels, and might after ſupply the old market with the addition of the new, and we might find a laſting benefit in a temporary diſtreſs; but I will for the preſent reject that ſpeculation, and for argument agree that the people of Ireland would be as much injured; as is ſuppoſed; by a determination in England not to take

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our linen.—What is the amount of this ſuppoſition? that at this critical time the greatneſs of the miſchief would prevent the meaſure; that the North would be in a ferment—— the nation in a temper to make it impoſſible to paſs the money bill— the army in danger of being diſbanded for want of pay, at the very time a northern riſing was rendered probable from a want of bread.—I do not think it very likely that England, involved in a civil war with America, where 60,000 men are deemed inadequate; in another war with France, who has already attempted to invade her dominions; in hourly apprehenſion of being involved in another with Spain, will add to all theſe difficulties, by diſperſing the army of Ireland, and ſoliciting an inſurrection among her people. England has learned by experience

perience the miſery of attempts to coerce nations by ſtarving them.

To the devoted country, ſuch a project has been preſent diſtraction; to the inflicting country, the loſs of empire.

It is more likely that England will attempt to pacify than provoke or relieve Ireland; we are to be guarded more againſt art than violence——a treacherous offer, than an open rupture.

We are to be guarded againſt a union.

It is a ſubject that connects itſelf with the times, and is inſeparable from the voluntary bounty of England.

CONSIDERING the diſpoſition ſhe diſplays to this country, I can conceive no propoſition of a union coming from her that would not be an aggravation of miſery, and a final blow to this nation, that already ſtaggers under the weight of her arm. I can form no other opinion, whether I conſider the commercial privileges we have loſt, or the deſpicable indulgencies we have obtained, by which ſolid loſſes have been ridiculed. The firſt and obvious idea of an union is a propoſal to tax Ireland without her conſent, in order to leſſen the preſent incumbrances of Great Britain. It is to us an extinction of conſtitution, and acceſſion of incumbrance.

A DEVICE, whereby England may reſt on the infancy of our commerce, burdens

burdens ſuppoſed to be too heavy for the maturity of hers.

That a union may be ſo qualified as to permit our ſtrength to get the ſtart of our incumbrance, is problematical; but this is certain, that no union which England has it now in her power to offer, can equal that which ſhe formerly gave to Scotland.

Because Ireland does now remit to England conſiderably more than Scotland has remitted ſince her union—becauſe England has incurred the principal part of her debt ſince that union, and has loſt thoſe Colonies, which were her Dower, when ſhe united to Scotland.

She gave to the latter country a ſhare in her monopoly, her colony-trade;

trade; ſhe could now do little more than reſtore to Ireland natural privileges which Scotland had before the union, and which, by the laws of Nature, almoſt every country is poſſeſſed of, unleſs ſuch as are connected with Great Britain.

She gave to Scotland her colonies—ſhe would give to you her debts—accumulated in gaining, and in loſing thoſe colonies.

Suppose however the moſt ſpecious union, an ample repreſentation with the free trade of England.

As to repreſentation, when we ſee in the Scotch members a uniform, and potent body of corruption, and in our own abſentees, a ſet of men as dependant on the miniſter as they are independant of the people; it may

may be a queſtion, whether our repreſentation might not be uſeleſs to one country, and pernicious to the other. Upon the ruins of national conſequence and public ſentiment, we ſhould have a few individuals, inſignificant in England, engroſſing the powers of Ireland, jobbing away her intereſt, never reſiding with her people, and of courſe, ignorant of her condition, and unawed by her reſentment—in ſuch an event, by the union we ſhould be deprived of our own particular aſſembly, and only enabled to corrupt the general aſſembly of the empire.

With relation to commerce, in ſtating the benefits of a union, we are to conſider what benefits we could give ourſelves without it——and the difference is the price for which we

ſell the liberty of being governed by our own legiſlature. We are not to ſtate the difference between our late, but our aſſociated condition, and a free trade.

THE imports from England for thoſe laſt ten years, have been upon an average, about 2,000,000l. of which above one half has been her own produce, the produce of a country which in ſoil and climate ſo much reſembles Ireland, that whatever can be brought forth in the one, is within the fertility of the other.

THE aſſociation would then ſave, and therefore give to this country, that million *.

WHAT

* *I underrate what Ireland might ſave by her aſſociation—there can be*

no

WHAT a woollen trade, for which, only you would harbour the idea of a union, would produce, it were presumption to ſpeculate; rejecting the ſuppoſition, that we have not wool enough for our own conſumption, which the advocates for England, in every bargain with Ireland, do not ſcruple to aſſert, and argue from, yet it is certain, that we have not now a quantity to furniſh an export, ſufficient to compenſate for the following drawbacks, which would accompany a union—a vaſt encreaſe of abſentee intereſt, in our deputies to the parliament of England.

Suppoſe a Scotch proportion, (if more, the argument will be ſtronger)

 and

no doubt, but that ſhe could ſave a much greater ſum,

and ſuppoſe each peer and commoner, upon an average, to have two thouſand pounds a year, which is no extravagant ſuppoſition, if we conſider, that we are likely to depute the moſt opulent perſons among us.

HERE is an abſentee intereſt of above 100,000 l. per annum, the immediate conſequence and child of the union. Add to this, another abſentee intereſt, incidental to the union, formed of a great proportion of the nobility, who have a great proportion of the landed property of Ireland.

To this muſt be added an occaſional abſentee intereſt compoſed of thoſe who would viſit Dublin, if the ſeat of legiſlature had not been transferred to London, of thoſe who love and purſue amuſement,

amuſement, that is, all thoſe who have no profeſſion and any property. To this may be added the revenues remitted to England. All ſupernumerary expences, which conſume a great part of revenues, originally created to corrupt in Ireland, would be transferred to corrupt in Great Britain. To ſo great a proportion of the old revenues muſt be added another entirely new, the land-tax, a meaſure inſeperable from a union —and if the rental of this country is 3,000,000l. per annum, and the tax one ſhilling in the pound; 150,000 l. will be annually remitted to England with all the other indefinite, uniform, and ruinous payments: ſo that Ireland would be a country conſiſting of merchants, lawyers, revenue officers, and peaſants, annually remitting to England the produce of trade, land, and revenue. From thence I ſhould conceive

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our aſſociations to be better than the moſt plauſible union.

But I will go farther, and affirm, that the aſſociation will give us a woollen trade without a union—becauſe, ſo long as we perſiſt in a non-conſumption agreement we deprive England of above 1,000,000 l. per annum, which is more than her fears tell her ſhe could loſe by letting us into a participation of the woollen trade. By giving us the woollen trade ſhe recovers the Iriſh trade.

The beſt means of obtaining any thing from England, is to make her gain by what ſhe gives.

When we formerly ſpoke on the ſubject of a union, we conſidered it not otherwiſe eligible than as a refuge from that

that policy, extended to every country whoſe fortune it was to have been connected with Great Britain; but now the remnant of her empire cannot afford to make unmerciful ſacrifices to the ſpirit of monopoly. With the dominions which ſhe has loſt, ſhe forfeits the power of abuſing ſuch as remain to her. The times have made England and Ireland one people, without aboliſhing the parliament of either. The latter country becomes reſpectable as ſhe advances in national ſpirit, and valuable as the former country diminiſhes in territory, and advances in difficulties, in the preſent complication of them, at war with the world after ſhe has been at war with herſelf.

GREAT BRITAIN muſt now do ſomething more than procure the neutrality of Ireland, that is, the inaction of above one fourth of the ſubjects of the Empire—ſhe muſt court our affection

affection by giving us an intereſt in her ſucceſſes, and ſome ſafety in her return to power, inſtead of leaving us to experience relief from contumely in nothing but her humiliation.

It is much to be lamented that government ſhould prorogue the Britiſh parliament without relieving Ireland, becauſe at the time when we may be called upon to act, they left us without any impreſſion in favour of their ſincerity, and have expoſed us to the plauſible offers of their enemies. Theſe may endeavour to divide us by holding out commercial privileges, which England formerly uſurped, and ſtill delays to reſtore. That we ſhall be united againſt the common enemy will be due to the virtue of Ireland; if we are leſs active againſt them it will be due to the conduct of the Britiſh miniſter and his majority

majority in parliament; who have left us ſo little to fight for, ſo little to expect from their ſincerity, and ſo much to apprehend from their power. We ought not however to be content with the apology ſuch a conduct affords us, but ſhould counteract by the ſpirit of our people the enemy deriving reſources from the errors of the miniſters of the crown; we ſhould array *ourſelves*, and in our perſonal capacity defend Ireland. The right of defending the realm has now devolved upon the individual. It is a right which will not wait for the formality of ſtatute, or the lingering of the executive power—if we leave the mode of defending our lives and properties to his majeſty's miniſters who have brought both into danger, we may reſt aſſured that they will adopt that method which is the moſt expenſive, the weakeſt and the worſt.

It will be deſpicable to have the people of Ireland protected againſt France, by the army, and the militia of England.

Under the laws which we have left, we may aſſociate in ſupport of our trade, and arm in defence of our Iſland. If we do, we ſhall become a nation—if not—we have loſt a great opportunity, and ſhall deliver this country to our children, in a condition, even worſe than that in which we received it from our fathers.

THE END.